

COMMISSION COMMENTS

Volume 4, Issue 2
July 2006

WE SUPPORT OUR TROOPS!

Military accommodations are permitted when there is a schedule conflict between a candidate's military duty and the Civil Service Commission's testing schedule. Each request for accommodation in testing is handled on a case-by-case basis and documentation reflecting the military conflict must be provided.

Applicants who would like to receive a military accommodation in testing should submit a request prior to the end of the application filing period. In cases where military orders are issued after the filing period, applicants should file a request as soon as possible. The Commission will make reasonable attempts to accommodate all documented military conflicts; however in some cases the most reasonable accommodation may be to have the applicant take the next regularly scheduled test.

The *Request for Accommodation in Testing* form is available on our website at www.csc.columbus.gov under the Public Forms link. All applicants submitting a Request for Accommodation in Testing will be notified in writing of the decision.

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EXAM FEEDBACK FORMS

Did you ever wonder why you were asked to complete a feedback form after completing a civil service test? Information obtained from candidates' feedback responses allows the Commission staff to continue to improve our testing process and testing environment. This form allows candidates the opportunity to share their opinions regarding the content of the test, the difficulty of the test, the testing facility, and the testing staff. All completed forms are reviewed by Commission staff. When feedback is provided for individual test items, those items are reviewed to ensure that there are no problems with the item itself.

If there appears to be a problem with a test question, staff will discuss the question and correct response with subject matter experts. This discussion may result in scoring adjustments, changes for future administrations of the exam, or it may be determined that no revision is necessary. Completing this form is optional, but Commission staff encourages candidates to provide feedback to help us continually improve.

*"The most
damaging
phrase in
the language
is: 'It's always
been done that
way.'"*

- Grace Hopper

COMPUTERIZED EXAMS

The Civil Service Commission is utilizing technology to create and administer computerized examinations. Recently, six new clerical job classes were tested using a software program called SkillCheck. This program allows for interactive testing over a variety of subjects that relate to actual job duties, including use of a computer and various software programs such as the Microsoft Office programs. With the SkillCheck program, the Commission can test candidates in various knowledge areas while evaluating their computer skills.

The SkillCheck program is not limited to clerical classes or to information technology job classes, such as Desktop Support Technician and Help



Desk Representative. It can be used for any classification that requires computer skills, such as Senior Storekeeper and Water Protection Specialist I. SkillCheck also contains a feature that allows customer service skills to be tested using

simulated call center scenarios. This feature was included in the recent administration of the Customer Service Representative I and 311 Service Representative I examinations.

Computerized testing is not new to the City of Columbus. For several years, the Commission has been using a software program called CritiCall to test candidates for Police Communications Technician. This exam is interactive also, requiring candidates to respond to audio and visual commands. The exam evaluates the candidate's ability to multi-task, which is an essential part of the Police Communications Technician job.

The Commission's computerized tests are administered in our Test Center at the Beacon Building.

SUMMER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The summer season is here and City pools are open through August 19. Each year the Recreation and Parks Department hires Lifeguards, Recreation and Parks Aides, Recreation Instructors, and Recreation Playground Leaders for their summer programs. Currently, we are still accepting applications for Lifeguard through July 14, 2006.

Application Response forms are available at the Civil Service Commission office at 50 West Gay Street, 6th floor, online at www.csc.columbus.gov, or at the Recreation and Parks Department at 420 West Whittier Street. The response form must be returned to the Recreation and Parks Department by the closing date listed on the form in order to be considered for any vacant positions.

To be a Lifeguard you must have the following certificates: Lifeguarding, First Aid and CPR. Contact the American Red Cross at (614)253-2740 for dates and locations of the classes.

Have a fun and safe summer!

WE'VE BEEN BUSY...AND THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING!

The Civil Service Commission accepted applications for the 2006 Firefighter Examination for three weeks April 24 – May 12. During that time we accepted 6047 applications!!



A candidate participates in a simulated rescue exercise during the last Firefighter Examination

Of those, 5399 applicants were approved and invited to Phase I – the multiple choice examination administered June 19 – 30. Candidates who pass the multiple choice exam will be invited to Phases II and III – the Physical Capabilities and Oral Board Examinations. All phases of the 2006 Firefighter

Examination are administered at our Testing Facility located at 750 Piedmont Road. Candidates who are successful on all three phases will be placed on an eligible list that will be established in November and made available to the Division of Fire for any recruit classes they may have in next two years. After passing the examination and being placed on the eligible list, candidates are required to undergo a thorough background investigation, including a polygraph examination, before a conditional offer of employment is made. After the conditional offer, candidates must have an interview with Fire personnel and also pass a physical, a vision test, and a cardiovascular stress test before a final offer of employment is made.

BACKGROUND SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUBLIC SAFETY JOBS



The Civil Service Commission uses a background screening questionnaire for three job classes which have Background Removal Standards: Police Officer, Firefighter, and Police Communications Technician. The Abbreviated Background Questionnaire or ABQ is filled out with the application for these jobs. The purpose of the ABQ is to screen out applicants who violate one of the automatic disqualifiers for those job classes. This is an initial screening at the application stage, and is not the actual background investigation conducted by the Divisions of Police and Fire.

Collecting ABQ information at the time of application saves time and money for both the City and the applicants; approximately 5% to 15% of applicants are typically screened out by the ABQ. The City saves money by reducing testing and personnel costs for the Civil Service Commission and the Background Investigation units in the Divisions of Police and Fire. The ABQ also is beneficial for applicants since it allows them to know up front that they do not qualify for the job for which they are applying. This helps applicants avoid taking time off from their current job or paying for travel expenses to take the civil service exam or to complete background interviews.

Examples of disqualifiers for police officer, firefighter, and police communication technician are:

- use of marijuana within one year of applying
- use of illegal drugs other than marijuana within three years of applying
- any felony conviction as an adult

Examples of disqualifiers for police officer and firefighter which do not apply to police communications technicians:

- a DUI or OMVI conviction in the past 5 years
- a Driver's license suspension in the past 3 years
- termination from a law enforcement or corrections officer position

The ABQ is only a brief background screening and does not replace the more intensive background investigation conducted by background investigators for those who score high enough on the exams to be processed. The post-exam background investigation includes records checks, a polygraph examination, a home interview, and an oral-board interview.

Applicants who are rejected based on the ABQ are notified by mail. There is an appeal process available, the Background Administrative Review, which allows rejected applicants to submit a letter of explanation and any supporting documentation. Since the purpose of the Background Removal Standards is to ensure objectivity, the Commission will not review letters of recommendation, transcripts, performance evaluations, etc. because these items are not relevant to the accuracy of the information disclosed on the background questionnaire.

Background Administrative Review requests must be submitted within ten days of the date of the rejection letter. All Background Administrative Review requests are reviewed and decided by the Civil Service Commissioners at their regular monthly meeting. Applicants are notified in writing of the Commission's decision. Anyone who is reinstated to the testing process by the Commission will be scheduled for the next available exam date.

Background removal standards can be found on our website at www.csc.columbus.gov by clicking on either the police or fire uniformed exam links, then clicking police officer or firefighter.

Civil Service Commission

Email: CivilService@columbus.gov

50 West Gay Street, Room 500
Columbus, Ohio 43215-9038
Phone: 614-645-8300
Fax: 614-645-8379

Piedmont Testing Center
750 Piedmont Road
Columbus, Ohio 43224-3266
Phone: 614-645-0800
Fax: 614-645-0866

www.csc.columbus.gov

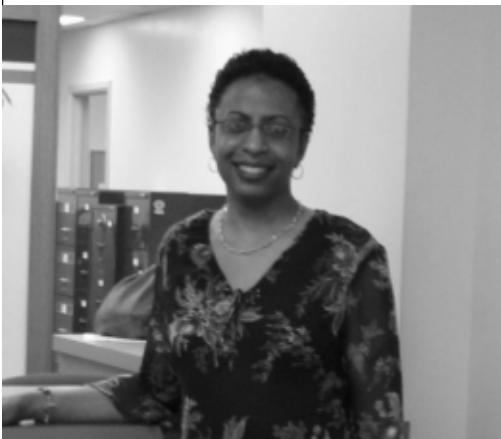
Commission Comments brought to you courtesy of:

Michael B. Coleman, Mayor
Priscilla R. Tyson, President
Grady L. Pettigrew, Jr., Member
Eileen Y. Paley, Member
Barbara McGrath, Executive Director

Articles and information contributed by Newsletter Committee:

Brenda Sobieck, Editor
Joey Faber, Assistant Editor
Barb Hutton
Sonya Moore
Sheri White
Laura Wright

MEET COMMISSION EMPLOYEE DENISE NAPIER



As a Personnel Administrative Officer with the Civil Service Commission, Denise Napier manages the Applicant and Employee Services Unit. Her responsibilities include overseeing applications, job postings, certifications, background reviews, hiring paperwork and a variety of other duties to assist City agencies, employees and the public. Denise has a master's degree in Human Resources and a bachelor's degree in Psychology and began her City career in 1988 as a Personnel Analyst I. Denise finds her work to be interesting and likes the fact that we continually look for ways to streamline our processes to make it easier and more efficient for our customers.

Away from work, Denise enjoys reading, working out, and doing arts and crafts such as polymer clay, beading, sewing and scrapbooking. Denise and her husband Jonathan Napier (employed by the City of Columbus, Department of Technology) have been married 21 years and have a fifteen year-old son who is a freshman at Gahanna Lincoln High School.

SAVE THE DATE - SATURDAY, AUGUST 5!

The City of Columbus is hosting the 2nd Annual Employee Family Fun Day at Wyandotte Lake, the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, and the Safari Golf Course. Bring your immediate and extended family and enjoy a great day!

Tentative schedule:

10:00 am - Open at Zoo
12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. - Lunch and Program
6:00 p.m. - Zoo closes
10:00 p.m. - Water park closes

****Tee times for golf handled individually by employees****

For more information and cost, please contact the Community Relations Commission at 645-1993.